



# **Clarke County Fire and Rescue**

## **Standard Operating Guideline**

John H. Enders VFD, Blue Ridge VFD, Boyce VFD, Clarke County Fire, EMS and Emergency Management

**Subject:** Mayday Readiness and Response

**SOG:** 400.04

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**Category:** Fire – Mayday Readiness and Response

**Sub Category:**  
Mayday

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**Effective Date:**  
July 1, 2017

## **Purpose**

To provide guidelines in the event a firefighter is unable to safely exit the hazard zone or an event that cannot be resolved by that individual within 30 seconds. Any member working on duty is empowered to call a Mayday when the above conditions exist. This can be during response; on scene of any incident or any time when a member becomes in trouble and a portable radio is available. Early identification of a Mayday situation is critical. The longer it takes to declare a Mayday situation the less likely a successful resolution is possible.

## **Definitions**

It is every individual firefighter's responsibility to maintain a high level of Mayday readiness at all times. This includes everyday preparation and prevention as well as the practiced ability to communicate and responds to a Mayday Scenario.

The following definitions have been adopted for use;

- CCFR – The Clarke County Fire-Rescue system consisting of the following departments; Boyce VFD, Blue Ridge VFD, John H. Enders VFD, and Clarke County Fire, EMS and Emergency Services
- Level 1 RIT – RIT teams report to command and stage in front of the building unless otherwise directed and begin RIT team preparation procedures. This level of RIT team consists of one Engine Company.
- Level 2 RIT– Incidents involving 2 or more alarms or when the level 1 RIT is activated a level 2 RIT/ team will be dispatched. This level RIT team is to assist the Level 1 team in meeting incident priorities. This level of RIT team is consists of 2 Engine Companies, 1 Truck Company, 1 Rescue Company and 2 EMS Transport Units (minimum 1-ALS level).
- Mayday – Any situation where a firefighter is unable to safely exit the hazard zone or an event that cannot be resolved by that individual within 30 seconds
- Mayday Readiness – NFPA 1500 defined as the ability to “don, doff and manipulate the SCBA in zero visibility while wearing firefighting gloves.”
- Mayday Factors - Most important factors for Mayday prevention begin with the following operational standards;

- Working within an Incident Command System/Risk Management System
- Working within the Incident Action Plan
- Always being accountable to someone within the incident command system (*Never Freelance*)
- Maintaining individual and crew air management
- Management of work cycles
- Monitoring distances traveled into buildings
- Layering of resources and providing for tactical reserve
- Planning and acting out an exit plan

## Procedure

### Mayday Initiation

1. Every firefighter has the responsibility to initiate a MAYDAY early.
2. Transmitting a MAYDAY
  - a. The message should be transmitted in such a way that command attention of all members. First say “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY” followed by identifying WHO is transmitting the MAYDAY. At this time no other radio traffic shall be transmitted until the nature of the MAYDAY is identified.
  - b. An acknowledgement of the mayday should come from command immediately.
  - c. If an immediate acknowledgement is not recognized by command, then the MAYDAY should be acknowledged by anyone hearing it and relayed to command.
  - d. If after 30 seconds there is no acknowledgement of the MAYDAY, the MAYDAY should be transmitted again until it is acknowledged.
  - e. **The firefighter should activate the EA (Emergency Activation) on his/her radio to insure radio priority.**
3. Once the MAYDAY is acknowledged, the members shall give the following LUNAR report;
  - a. Location – You should listen for the firefighter to advise the floor of the structure they are on; whether they are in Quadrant A, B, C, etc.; the area of the building they are in; and whether they are on side A,B,C, or D. They may also say what kind of room they are in such as an office, bedroom, bathroom, storage closet, etc.
  - b. Unit - What apparatus the firefighter is assigned to. This information might seem irrelevant when you’re in a life-threatening situation inside a structure, but it gives command a quick, down-and-dirty clue about the part of the fireground they were last assigned. Command can also use information from their company officer and other crewmembers, who may have made their way out of the structure
  - c. Name – The firefighter providing their name is important because it allows command to cross-reference it with the accountability system. This could be very useful if there is more than one missing member or if there’s another member who command didn’t know was missing but had the good fortune of being located.
  - d. Assignment & Air Supply - Providing their assignment is an excellent starting point for the search and rescue, especially if they don’t know or can’t provide you their exact location. Air is a critical resource because the firefighter can only last a little longer than the supply of air he/she carried in on their back. Knowing how much they have, and relaying this information when they call the mayday, helps command understand the urgency of the situation.
  - e. Resources Needed - “Resources” can include just about anything. For instance, the firefighter can tell command to “throw a ladder to the B side second floor” or “my leg is pinned and I need a pry bar.” This type of information saves time when it’s in short supply by detailing early in the mayday situation exactly what is needed.

**It is of extreme importance that all crews continue to operate at their pre-designated assignments.**

## After the MAYDAY is transmitted and acknowledged

1. Command will transmit the MAYDAY across the incident channel and determine if additional channels are needed to manage the MAYDAY.
2. In the event that the incident commander deems it necessary to establish an alternate channel to handle the MAYDAY the ECC will announce to all units which channel will be deemed the "Incident Channel" and the "Mayday Channel" per command's direction.
3. The incident commander shall activate the RIT (Rapid Intervention Team) or FAST (Firefighter Assistant and Search Team) to locate and determine the incident priorities for successful rescue.
4. After a RIT/FAST team (level 1) is activated the ECC will automatically begin dispatch for a RIT/FAST team level 2 (2-Engines, 1-Truck, 1-Rescue, 2-EMS Transport units-minimum 1 ALS). In addition the ECC will initiate a PAR check with command.
5. The firefighter should activate their PASS device and attempt self-rescue

## Firefighter Responsibilities

1. Individual firefighter responsibilities for a MAYDAY include;
  - a. Maintaining preparation and reaction skills
  - b. Early communication of MAYDAY situation utilizing the above standard
  - c. Controlling an emotional response to the situation
  - d. Once the MAYDAY situation is recognized and reported, each firefighter should remember;
    - a. B – Breath
    - b. O – Organize
    - c. A - Act
  - e. Utilization of IAFF Fire Ground Survival training
    - a. SCBA familiarization
    - b. High/low profile wall breach
    - c. Disentanglement
    - d. Ladder bail
    - e. Window hang
    - f. GRAB LIVES
      - G – Check Air Gauge
      - R – Radio for Assistance
      - A – Activate PASS Device
      - B – Control Breathing, Conserve Air
      - L – Stay Low
      - I – Illuminate, Turn Flashlight On
      - V – Make Loud Noises (Volume)
      - S – Shield Your Airway (last ditch effort)
  - f. Use and care personal protective equipment
  - g. Portable radio proficiency and use
  - h. Practiced crew communications
  - i. Roving/replacement firefighter integration into crew
    - a. Individual firefighters have to be responsible to ask if not initiated by Company Officer

## Officer Responsibilities

1. Company Officers are responsible for Crew development and practice. Consistent training and practice with regards to Mayday prevention is critical for rapid and appropriate response to a true Mayday situation. This involves setting a consistent attitude and expectations for all crew members regarding Mayday readiness. This also involves developing routines that are encouraged and participated in by the Company Officers.
2. Company Officers responsibility for Mayday prevention include:
  - a. Integrating SCBA checks into crew routines

- b. Practicing crew communication in the hazard zone
- c. Maintaining knowledge of portable radios and practicing their use
- d. Ensuring Company Officer responsibilities and expectations are clear to the entire crew
- e. Practicing and maintaining crew integrity/accountability
- f. Instilling the standard that firefighters should always stay on a hoseline

### ECC (Emergency Communications Center) Responsibilities

1. The responsibility of ECC is to assist Command (when established) to recognize the MAYDAY.
  - a. In the events the Incident Commander does not acknowledge the MAYDAY after 30 seconds; the ECC should notify command of the MAYDAY.
  - b. The ECC should prepare for the use of additional radio channels to assist with the MAYDAY
  - c. In the event an EA (Emergency Activation) is done and is not followed by a MAYDAY the ECC should follow procedures for verifying EA activation.